

**State of Michigan
House of Representatives**

Submitted to the Committee on Energy and Technology

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**Testimony of Douglas G. Wood, Director
County of Kent
Department of Public Works**

Good morning, Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify today. My name is Douglas Wood and I am the Kent County Director of the Department Public Works.

As part of its integrated solid waste management program, Kent County owns and operates recycling facility, a landfill, transfer station, four permanent household hazardous waste collection program, and a Waste-to-Energy facility. The County owned Waste-to-Energy facility, operated by Covanta Energy, produces steam that supplies the downtown district heating and cooling system and generates 14 MW of renewable energy that is sold to Consumers Energy Company under a contract through 2022.

The Kent County Waste-to-Energy Facility has been in operation for 17 years receiving and processing solid waste from the cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, East Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Granville and Walker. It is a designated Michigan Department of Environmental Quality "Clean Corporate Citizen" and our South Kent Landfill environmental management systems is certified ISO 14001:2004. The landfill receives ash residue from the WTE.

On behalf of Kent County, I support the Committee's efforts to establish a statewide Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). It is very important that that RPS, however, include waste-to-energy facilities as a defined renewable eligible to participate in the program. Waste-to-Energy (WTE) facilities are currently included in the state's definition of renewable energy facilities, is included in the Federal renewable definition, and is included in 24 other state renewable definitions (only 22 states currently have WTE facilities).

Waste-to-Energy facilities are municipal solid waste infrastructure that originated as Qualifying Facilities (QFs) under the Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act of 1978 (PURPA) and Michigan's Public Act 2. While their primary purpose is to manage solid waste in an environmentally superior manner (note the EPA solid waste hierarchy), a critical component of these facilities is the generation and

sale of renewable energy. These facilities should not be forced to compete in an energy market with base load fossil fuel, but be recognized as a renewable energy source worth supporting and promoting under the RPS.

One ton of trash managed at a WTE facility generates around 540 kilowatt-hours of electricity, reduces greenhouse gasses by 1 ton, and offsets one barrel of imported oil. By comparison, that same ton of trash, if sent to a landfill once recycling efforts were complete, would only generate approximately 20 kilowatt hours of electricity, in addition to producing significant amounts of methane, which is a greenhouse gas 22 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Trash is an indigenous, home grown fuel that can either be wasted, or used for another purpose. That trash which isn't recycled should be converted into renewable energy to help the state offset its use of fossil fuel, meet greenhouse gas reduction goals, diversify the fuel stream, and stabilize energy prices.

Some of the Kent County Waste-to-Energy Facility facts are:

- Through May 2007 3.2 million tons of solid waste has been processed
- 1.4 billion kWh of electricity has been sold to Consumers Energy
- 1.3 billion pounds of steam has been used in our district heating and cooling system
- 3,937 acre feet of landfill space has been saved
- 5,512,000 barrels of oil have been saved
- Recovered 94,000 tons of ferrous metal

All of this has been achieved while maintaining 100% compliance with permit standards on all environmental tests to date.

We urge you to help this facility to remain economically viable long term by allowing it to compete within the Renewable Portfolio Standard that you are currently developing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Enclosure